

And it costs most of us nothing and that's why it should have our utmost honor and respect. For the same exact flag many not have been through all the battles, but what it represents has been, and that is more than anyone person can say.

The flag has seen it all and survived it all, therefore, the spirit and freedom which it represents has survived it all. It is the epitome of the sacred symbol we know it to be.

It stands atop the United States Supreme Court building as justice attempts to be served; it stands over the United States Capitol in hopes of good laws being passed and bad ones being killed.

It stands in schoolyards as children play, over Court Houses and City Halls as good grassroots government is hopefully being administered. It drapes the shoulders of our country's finest athletes as they represent us at the Olympics.

But let us not forget that it has also left this earth to represent us, to fly into the Heavens and land on the moon. It has flown into the wild blue yonder far into the majestic skies reaching toward the very face of God, only to explode, and quickly plummet into the sea with the Challenger and the brave Americans in it.

There is little of our heritage that it has not seen; there are fewer of our victories, triumphs, and tragedies that it has not experienced first hand. It has waved at half mast and at full mast, but it has never ceased to wave.

It is not to be burned or buried, but flown with great pride and admiration. Some say it is not the flag, but what it represents that we should honor—I say we cannot honor one without a pledge of allegiance to the other.

The Pledge of Allegiance nationally debuted in October 1892 on Columbus Day when 12 million children across America recited it for the first time.

The Pledge of Allegiance has had three major changes:

Originally it read: "I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Republic for which it stands: one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

June 14, 1923, it was revised to "the flag" instead of "my flag" and the words "United States" were added.

One year later it was revised to read "the flag, of the United States of America."

But the most significant change came on Flag Day, June 14, 1954, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower added these two simple, but profound words: "Under God."

And this is what he said about adding those two words: "In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource in peace and war."

The Pledge of Allegiance as we know it today is only 31 words packed with pride, honor, loyalty and devotion.

Red Skelton, a brilliant comedic mind of another generation shared this story on television many years ago. Little did he know this story would be so poignant and prophetic today. He shared the story of his teacher Mr. Laswell who came to think his class was just saying the pledge of allegiance out of routine so he made a drastic change in their schedule one day. This is what he said to them:

"I've been listening to you boys and girls recite the Pledge of Allegiance all semester and it seems as though it is becoming monotonous to you. If I may, may I recite it and try to explain to you the meaning of each word."

I—me, an individual, a committee of one.
Pledge—dedicate all of my worldly goods to give without self pity,

Allegiance—my love and devotion

To the flag—our standard, old glory, a symbol of freedom. Wherever she waves, there's been respect because your loyalty has given her a dignity that shouts freedom is everybody's job.

United—that means we all have come together.

States—individual communities that have united into 48 great states. Forty-eight individual communities with pride and dignity and purpose; all divided with imaginary boundaries, yet united to a common purpose and that's love for country.

And to the Republic—a state in which sovereign power is invested in representatives chose by the people to govern. And government is the people and it's from the people to the leaders, not from the leaders to the people.

For which it stands, one nation—one nation meaning "so blessed by God."

Indivisible—incapable of being divided.

With liberty—which is freedom—the right of power to live one's life without threats, fear or some sort of retaliation

And justice—the principle or quality of dealing fairly with others.

For all—which means boys, and girls, it's as much your country as mine.

Skelton later said since he was a young boy that two states had been added to our country and that two words had been added to our pledge—"Under God."

Then he smiled and said, "Wouldn't it be a pity if someone said that (those two words "Under God") is a prayer and they would eliminate it from schools too?"

Little did he know that now, many years later, that very effort has been discussed before the United States Supreme Court.

Though the words to the Pledge of Allegiance have changed its purpose, meaning and intent has not.

But the flag still waves and our nation is still one nation under God and we still live under the banner of democracy and the flag waves in our churches, school yards, state and national government buildings and always in our hearts and homes—because that's where freedom originated and that is where it must remain.

When we pledge allegiance to our flag, we are making a commitment, and what we are committed to is what we become as individual people, and as a nation. The destinies of many nations have been determined by what their people were allegiant to—Rome is a good example of that. Let America never become a Rome.

Our flag is more than three colors of cloth and millions of pieces of thread sown by hand. It is more than Betsy Ross and Francis Scott Key. It represents a message of hope and freedom that is carried in the hearts and souls of the people of a nation for generations.

I pray today that God will continue to bless this country and that we may never divorce ourselves from the preservation of that freedom for which our men and women have died and our flag still boldly stands.

Now let us stand and with great pride, honor, humility and resolve—with great enthusiasm, fervor, patriotism, passion and respect to say our pledge of allegiance together as we have never said it before.●

TRIBUTE TO GALELYN MCELROY

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Ms. Galelyn McElroy from Prospect, KY, who has been selected to participate in the inaugural year of the American Civic Education Teacher Awards. This program is de-

signed to promote recognition and respect for teachers of civic education across the United States.

The American Civic Education Teacher Awards are a part of the Alliance for Representative Democracy which is designed to educate Americans about the relationship between the government and the American people it serves. This program helps individuals better understand the way the government works and how it relates to them personally in their individual lives.

Ms. McElroy teaches senior legal and government services, U.S. history, and world civilization at Central High in Prospect, KY, and has been providing educational leadership in the classroom there for 13 years. She has gone above and beyond the curriculum expectations by establishing out of school mentoring experiences for her students at local law firms and legal study programs through the University of Louisville. She motivates them to think about the future by providing them with real-world experiences that partner with their civic education studies.

I now ask my fellow colleagues to join me in thanking Ms. McElroy for her commitment to making Kentucky a better place through educational excellence and for providing her students the motivation to succeed in life. I know I can speak for all Kentuckians when I say congratulations and thank you for everything that you do. Teachers like Ms. McElroy are an inspiration and a true example of leadership in our State.●

RECOGNIZING WISE COUNTY'S SESQUICENTENNIAL

● Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to announce the sesquicentennial anniversary of historic Wise County. The centennial celebration has created and will continue to create community awareness of opportunities for the preservation of Wise County's rich heritage. In addition, this event will foster pride in Wise County's educational, cultural, social, and economic resources and will encourage the brainstorming of ways to ensure a bright future for Wise County.

Throughout the year Wise County has come up with exciting ways to celebrate its centennial birthday. In May there was a kickoff ceremony to begin the celebration, as well as a Business Appreciation Day. Other presentations include a play on the history of Wise County, a Miss Sesquicentennial Pageant, and a presentation of Coal Camp Songs. The celebration will culminate with the 150th Birthday Bash on from noon until 11:00 pm on August 12 at the Lonesome Pine Raceway, which will feature food, games, music and fun.

The sesquicentennial celebration of Wise County is a great way to remember its history, appreciate its current state, and look forward to its bright future. Over the years, I have enjoyed

many opportunities to join the people of Wise County for events, festivals, and meetings, and I am proud to be a part of this sesquicentennial celebration and look forward to sharing in many more events in the coming years.●

RECOGNIZING THE CITY OF GALAX CENTENNIAL

● Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to announce the centennial anniversary of the historic city of Galax. The centennial celebration created and will continue to create community awareness of opportunities for the preservation of Galax's rich heritage. In addition, this event will foster pride in Galax's educational, cultural, social, and economic resources and will encourage the brainstorming of ways to ensure a bright future for the city of Galax.

Throughout the year, the city of Galax has come up with exciting ways to celebrate its centennial. July was Freedom Celebration Month in Galax which included a Fourth of July parade and the Virginia State Barbeque Championship. August is Musical Heritage Celebration Month and will include the Annual Old Fiddler's Convention, as well as the Annual Championship Rodeo. September is Free Enterprise, Agriculture and Industry Month and will feature a play on the history of the city of Galax, as well as events with authors Sharyn McCrumb and Robert Chappell.

This centennial celebration of the city of Galax is a great way to remember its history, appreciate its current state, and look forward to its bright future. Over the years I have enjoyed many opportunities to join the people of the city of Galax for events, festivals, and meetings, and I am proud to be a part of this centennial celebration and look forward to sharing in many more events in the coming years.●

RECOGNIZING PLANTERS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the Planters Company which has had a fruitful working relationship with Suffolk County over the past century and has one of its major production facilities located there. To celebrate, Planters has embarked on a 4-month, cross-country tour visiting landmarks in Planters' history. Over the past century Planters has consistently delivered a variety of fresh-tasting nuts and has also developed an American icon in the internationally famous Mr. Peanut.

On Tuesday, June 13, 2006 Planters NUTmobile and Centennial Display Tour made a stop in Suffolk, VA. Visitors got the opportunity to meet and interact with Mr. Peanut, sample fresh roasted peanuts, view Planters and Mr. Peanut collectibles from the past century, and put themselves in moments

and events throughout Planters and American history using green screen technology.

Over the past century Planters' Suffolk facility has enjoyed a wonderful relationship with the city of Suffolk. The Planters Suffolk facility produces a variety of nut products. Planters has employed thousands of Virginians over the years, and many more have enjoyed and benefited from both its products and its reputation in the Suffolk community. Planters has been a model for the type of relationship that should exist between communities and businesses over the past century, and we look forward to working with them for the next 100 years.●

TRIBUTE TO RALPH CONTE

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today I wish to acknowledge the retirement and to honor the service of a fellow Virginian, a true patriot, and a career civil servant of the Department of Defense who has given 39 years of dedicated military and civilian service to our country. Mr. Ralph Conte was born in Ponza, Italy, in 1940. He immigrated to the United States in January 1956 whereupon he studied engineering at New York University. He was commissioned as an Air Force officer through OTS in June 1967, and his first assignment was at Aviano Air Base, Italy. His military career included serving in Vietnam as a member of the premier combat engineering unit in the Air Force, known as RED HORSE. He further served at Kunsan Air Base in Korea and at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH. In 1975 he separated from active duty and continued service to his country as a civilian manager at Air Force Logistics Command and a NATO program manager at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. He finally settled in Virginia in June 1986, working for the Air National Guard eventually as the chief of programs.

I believe everyone in the Air National Guard will attest that very few individuals have had a greater positive impact on providing the finest facilities and installations for the Air National Guard to accomplish their missions. During his tenure at the Air National Guard, Mr. Conte was directly responsible for planning and programming facility and real property requirements worth over \$7 billion to support 177 Guard locations throughout the 50 States, 3 territories, and the District of Columbia. His leadership, outstanding technical expertise, and unlimited energy have created a blueprint for success for which generations of Air National Guardsmen will reap the benefits. I offer sincere appreciation and thanks for his service, and wish him and his family the best in retirement.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to

the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:40 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 467. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives and a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 250. An act to amend the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 to improve the Act.

S. 3693. An act to make technical corrections to the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005.

S. 3741. An act to provide funding authority to facilitate the evacuation of persons from Lebanon, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3682. An act to redesignate the Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia as the Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge.

H.R. 5683. An act to preserve the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, California, by providing for the immediate acquisition of the memorial by the United States.

H.R. 5877. An act to amend the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 to extend the authorities provided in such Act until September 29, 2006.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

ENROLLED BILLS PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, August 2, 2006, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bills:

S. 250. An act to amend the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 to improve the Act.

S. 3693. An act to make technical corrections to the Violence Against Women Act and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005.

S. 3741. An act to provide funding authority to facilitate the evacuation of persons from Lebanon, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with